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SENECA ROCKS

Ray Blum

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MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROCK CLIMBING AT
SENECA ROCKS

PREPARED FOR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR OUTDOOR
RECREATION MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Seneca Rocks, located on the Monongahela National Forest, is considered both a scenic attraction and, more importantly, one of the best rock climbing areas in the East. As demand for this high risk sport continues to increase throughout the country, so do the concerns by public land managers who are being challenged to protect both the resource and the user. In order to understand these concerns, a study was implemented at Seneca Rocks.

Since rock climbing occurs on such a few areas by a small number of dedicated enthusiasts, little is known of the perceptions and concerns of the rock climbers. In this case, unknown elements were discovered by using a questionnaire and soliciting answers from both the rock climbers, plus past and present managers. Both solicitations were necessary for comparison and analysis purposes. Another questionnaire was developed to obtain information from managers of other similar areas where rock climbing occurs. All of this information was reviewed, analyzed and categorized into major concerns. This paper, then, addresses these concerns and develops the necessary recommendations to aid in management of rock climbing at Seneca Rocks.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Objective

Rock climbing as a recreational sport is not a recent phenomenon. It is a sport of high risk that is challenging and dangerous with a few dedicated participants. Because of the high risk involved, managers of public lands, where the sport is a major activity, are being challenged to manage the resource and protect the user, plus protect the public agency from liability. At one time or another, these preceeding problems have been a concern to managers. (McEwen 1983).

Due to the unusual problems associated with high risk sports, such as rock climbing, and the lack of information for managers on actual problems, a study was developed at Seneca Rocks to understand, analyze and recommend various procedures to resolve these problems and concerns, while meeting the following objectives:

- . To preserve and protect the resource
- . To protect the user
- . To provide, preserve and enhance a satisfying recreational experience
- . To protect the agency from liability suits
- . To keep the user adequately informed.

Project Area - Seneca Rocks

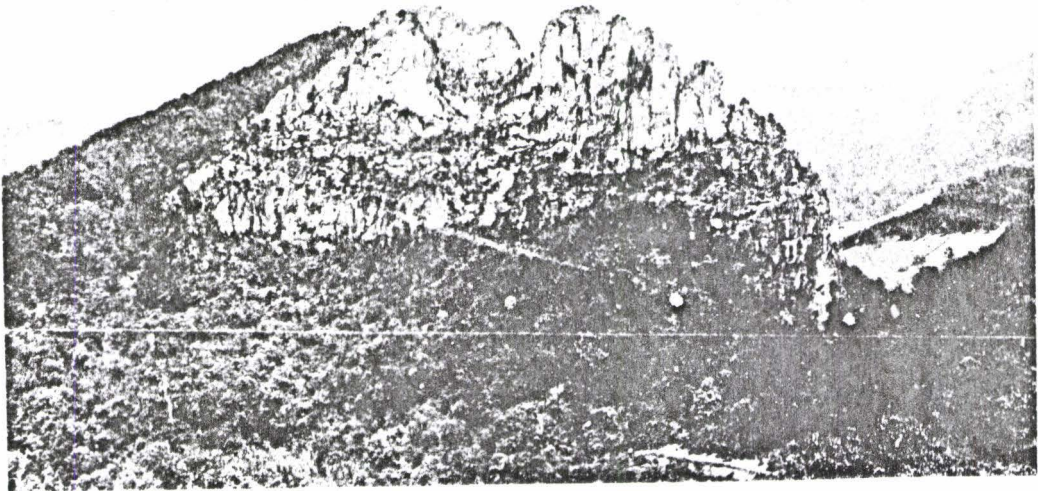
In 1969, the Federal Government purchased a tract of land that included a dominant land form known as Seneca Rocks. These rocks have long been noted as a scenic attraction within West Virginia, but, in addition, are popular with rock climbers. The area is located in the extreme northeastern portion of the Monongahela National Forest in the headwaters of the Potomac River. This location is within a four-hour drive of the major eastern metropolitan areas, such as Pittsburgh, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, and Richmond.

These rocks are a magnificent quartzite formation rising 1,000 feet above the North Fork River. (See Appendix A for map of area). Due to the hardness of the rock and the degree of difficulty, they offer the climber a unique opportunity not found elsewhere in the area. They are considered by many climbers to be the best climb in the East. There are over 173 major routes, varying in difficulty from the easiest (5.0) to the most difficult (5.11). (Webster 1980). However, the easiest access to the top is to use a steep trail up the back side of the rocks. This trail is "non-technical" and is used by the general hiker.

Even prior to the acquisition of Seneca Rocks by the Federal Government, climbers had used the rocks extensively. In addition, the Special Forces of the U. S. Army has trained there since World War II. During the 1960's, recreational activities in the general area have increased and, to accommodate

this use, a National Recreation Area (N.R.A.) was established in 1965. The Spruce Knob - Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area encompasses 100,000 acres, including Seneca Rocks. In order to develop the recreation potential of the N.R.A., a land acquisition program, which included acquisition of Seneca Rocks and key tracts in the general vicinity, was begun. Several of these private tracts were acquired through condemnation, leaving an aftermath of public resentment that partially exists today. These tracts were acquired for recreational development and, in keeping with the N.R.A. theme, a Visitor Center and picnic area were constructed and opened in 1977. By 1983, the Visitor Center use averaged 80,000 visitors per year. (Blum 1984). The only other construction was a footbridge in 1972 across the North Fork River for the climbers to gain access to Seneca Rocks.

Seneca Rocks - One of the best-known landmarks of West Virginia.



These developments have increased visitation to the area, but additional problems have occurred.

Climbers are not the only ones to use the area. It has become a gathering place for spelunkers, whitewater enthusiasts and backpackers. However, due to the lack of adequate camping in the area - both Government and private - the climbers and others have camped adjacent to Seneca Rocks at the junction of the North Fork River and Seneca Creek. This area, known as Roy Gap, is a primitive undeveloped area with heavy usage. (See Appendix A).

The Study

Rock climbing is a recreational activity which attracts individuals who are an independent lot with a different set of values and ethics from the general recreationist. (McEwen 1983). Because the climber is different from the non-risk recreationist and, due to the limited number of participants and the relatively few climbing areas, it is very difficult to know or understand all of the concerns involved, especially from a climber's viewpoint. In order to gain a better understanding of these concerns, a study was developed to obtain the perceptions of the climber and the perceptions of four former and present managers who worked at Seneca Rocks. These managers were in daily contact with climbers. A third part of the study involved contacting land managers of like climbing areas concerning problems and management controls used on their areas.

The basic purpose of this study is to review, compare and analyze the perceptions of climbers and managers. Once a concern has been identified, a recommended solution will be presented.

Study Limitations

The focus of this study centers exclusively on the problems and concerns at Seneca Rocks. Recommendations will be made which cover all of the facets for management of Seneca Rocks.

Climbers, as a group, are very skeptical of controls or regulations implemented by government. When climbers are contacted, problems or conflicts may not surface because of the fear of added government regulations. Climbers generally fear regulations will inhibit their existing freedom. This is a major limitation when the government makes the contact, rather than a non-government group.

The other major drawback is the limited number of contacts made with the climbers. These contacts were made during the late fall when use had decreased considerably; whereas, a greater number of contacts should have been made for a full in depth analysis. On the positive side, the climbers contacted in the late fall are normally more dedicated and knowledgeable about rock climbing problems.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research into the sport of rock climbing or mountaineering is very limited or just not available. But in order to understand the complex problems associated with the sport, a literature review was made of other high risk recreational sports with similar problems. These principles and the information gathered can be applied to rock climbing.

Because of the complexity of providing a management strategy covering all of the management operations at Seneca Rocks, the following subject areas were researched.

- . Social Behavior
- . High Risk and Liability
- . Management Controls

Social Behavior

Social behavior is a science unto itself, but its practical application has not been extensively explored in the field of recreation. This science is very important because when management changes take place, it affects people and their behavior; these effects need to be understood, especially by the manager.

Petersen and Lime (1979) point out that the management of people in a recreation environment is extremely important. Whenever a course of action is

taken, it should be based upon a complete analysis of the problem, setting management objectives and modifying people's behavior when necessary to meet those management objectives. Other user controls can be applied, but modification of behavior is the linking mechanism for understanding and controlling such problems as density, crowding, carrying capacity and conflicts.

Clark, Hendee, Campbell (1971) reported that managers must understand user concerns, rather than their own administrative concerns. This is especially important for rock climbing because of the safety and high risk involved. Concerns associated with rock climbing are sometimes different than in a non-risk activity.

Since conflict and demand are related, managers must be constantly aware whenever demand increases for a limited resource. However, a major problem for managers is the determination of the conflict and the seriousness of it. The best means to determine a conflict is to communicate with the user. In a lecture at Clemson University Recreation Short Course, Hobson Bryant, author of the book, Conflict in the Great Outdoors, spoke of conflict in terms of specialization. The more specialized a user becomes in his sport, the chances of conflict occurring are greater. This is particularly applicable to rock climbing because of the high degree of specialization.

In most cases, where conflict does exist, the cause can be attributed to overcrowding or use beyond the designated carrying capacity. Heberlein (1977) stipulates that carrying capacity consists of a combination of factors to be considered together. They include management objectives, the physical

and biological nature of the resource and the preference and tolerances of the users. But Heberlein believes the single most important factor in determining social carrying capacity is user satisfaction which includes such items as quality of environment, personal benefits and perceived crowding. In another study on conflict, Jacobs (1977) examined some of the underlying causes which include: 1) the complexity of one's expectations, 2) incompatible lifestyles, and 3) experience expectations. All of these factors are involved in determining the reasons for conflict on a project area.

High Risk and Liability

Rock climbing is a high risk activity that exposes both the manager and agency to claims of liability and lawsuits resulting from injuries to climbers. Since this sport, in most cases, is a legitimate use of government lands, it behooves the manager to minimize or eliminate potential sources of accidents. Although the number of lawsuits connected directly with rock climbing is almost non-existent, (McEwen 1983), the possibility is ever present.

Gold (1984), in his paper, contends that the manager needs to use a systematic approach to eliminate unsafe conditions, provide adequate information describing the potential risk, and means to avoid injury. In doing this, managers take on the responsibility in a reasonable way to avoid negligence, minimizing the possibility of lawsuits.

Black, Farrell, and McIssac (1984) speak of a recent effort in California to provide immunity to park and recreation personnel in a new law passed in the state legislature. A bill, granting recreational immunity to public entities but with some important limitations, was passed and became effective January 1, 1984. The focus of the bill is on hazardous recreational activities but with sound reasonable balance between personal responsibility and reasonable protection for the user. The courts may further define some aspects of this bill, but the user should at least be forewarned of hazardous conditions and be provided reasonable protection.

However, agencies managing high risk recreation uses should not exert too much control for fear that restrictions will diminish the opportunity. Adventure, challenge, skill and risk are beneficial needs in today's modern society, but the manager needs to ensure that the user is knowledgeable of dangers involved in these activities.

Management Controls

Most climbers resent any constraints on their activities. Unlike many casual recreationists, climbers are generally unorganized and very independent. At the same time, managers must plan to protect the limited natural resources and the quality of experience. As a result of these two conflicting factors, the sport of rock climbing on public lands is often the target of management control. Due to the concentration of climbers, the management process must proceed carefully to strike a balance between over-control and allowing potentially dangerous activities.

Recent research indicates that of the two systems of controls, direct and indirect, the indirect control is the most effective over the long run. McDonald and Humitt (1982) point out that when managers have this choice, indirect controls should be considered because users will feel less interference from managers.

Petersen and Lime (1979) also report that it is extremely important for the manager to set objectives, but also to consider the concerns of the user in determining those objectives. When objectives are set, the managers should guard against methods that are devious or objectionable. Petersen and Lime indicate that several options are open to managers. They are regulation, licensing and manipulation of fees which are forms of direct control; whereas, site design, information and training are forms of indirect control. All of these need to be considered, but the range of options are really dependent on the objectives. Another form of indirect control is proposed by Bryan (1979) in which the specialized sportsman places a high value on manipulating the environment for himself, rather than having it done for him. This will maximize the satisfaction of the user.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The study surveyed ninety-two rock climbers who use Seneca Rocks. The survey was completed during October and November 1984, and contact was made with those climbers who were in the Seneca Rocks area. In addition, contact was made with the members of the mountaineering section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

Not only were rock climbers contacted, but four (4) managers were surveyed for their opinions about their concerns. These managers were chosen because of their high degree of familiarity with the problems and their length of service in working at the Seneca Rocks Visitor Center.

In addition, nine (9) land managers who manage rock climbing areas similar to Seneca Rocks were contacted. These contacts included private lands, State Parks and National Parks over a wide range of geographic areas. (See Appendix C for listing).

A questionnaire was used to gain an understanding of the perceptions and concerns of climbers and managers. This was a self-administered form including a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the convenience of the user. These questionnaires were distributed from the Seneca Rocks Visitor Center and from the Gendarme, a climbing shop located at Seneca Rocks. Climbers and managers were asked a series of fourteen questions dealing with potential management problems (See Appendix B for specific questions).

Another questionnaire for land managers was used to gain a better understanding of management controls on similar areas. A series of nine questions were asked but not rated, with input in the form of written answers. (See Appendix C).

CHAPTER IV

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

There is a need to examine the management situation as described by the current manager. This will help in understanding the results of the questionnaire.

Social Concerns

Seneca Rocks, because of its proximity to major population centers and high rating as a place to climb, has attracted a large number of climbers.

However, exact figures of usage concerning rock climbing at Seneca Rocks are not available and no known study of use levels has been conducted.

Therefore, the following are general observations (Blum 1984):

- . The number of climbers is currently estimated between four thousand and six thousand per year, but use has leveled off during the period of 1981 - 1984.
- . On weekends, two hundred or more climbers have been observed climbing simultaneously on Seneca Rocks.
- . At peak use times during holiday weekends, lines of novice climbers have been observed waiting for a turn on the easy routes.
- . Organized youth groups using Seneca Rocks have increased significantly in the last three years.
- . The camping facilities are heavily used during the weekend from mid-April to mid-October.

The social problems resulting from existing use levels can generate conflicts among all user groups. This is especially true between the novice, who is usually with an organized group, and the experienced climber, who is often with a smaller group. Certain popular routes are

used for a long period of time, by either a group or a slow novice, creating a conflict. However, conflicts seem minimal among experienced rock climbers. In another situation, a potential conflict exists between the climber and the general hiker who ascends to the top of the rocks using a trail on the backside. These hikers do not share the same values as the rock climber (Bryan 1979) and, also, have been known to drop objects - including rocks - in the direction of persons climbing the rocks. This represents a safety hazard.

Environmental Concerns

The increased use, extending from approximately 1970, has created an adverse impact on both the trail system and the camping area known as Roy Gap. Since camping has never been restricted, except east of the North Fork River, informal sites have occurred without agency control or direction. These sites have deteriorated to the point of needing rehabilitation work. In addition, the area has no water or toilet facilities and, in most cases, the climbers will use the adjacent picnic areas for both these items. Because of the inconvenience involved, certain climbers use the immediate area for their toilet needs which creates health and sanitation problems.

The trail system for access to the climbing routes is in poor condition. (See Appendix A). These trails were developed by climbers and, due to improper location, have now started to erode and gully.

The other major trail is used by the non-technical hiker to gain access to the top of the rocks. This trail was improperly located and was developed by hikers over an extended period of time. Unfortunately, the trail has long sustained grades which have caused erosion and loss of vegetation. This trail, because of its grade, presents both environmental and safety problems to the user. In response to erosion problems, a part of this trail has been already relocated.

Safety Concerns

Safety is a particular problem at Seneca Rocks because of the high risk element involved in rock climbing. Since technical climbing routes do exist and are heavily used, both serious accidents and fatalities have occurred. In the last ten years, there have been five fatalities, with the last one occurring in April, 1985. In addition, three to four serious accidents occur each year requiring a rescue. These mishaps have affected both experienced and inexperienced climbers.

Other elements with a potential safety problem are organized youth groups similar to "Outward Bound". These groups have inexperienced climbers with various competency levels of supervision. Although no serious accidents or fatalities have occurred, the chance of a serious mishap does exist.

On a more positive note, the search and rescue operation at Seneca Rocks has become more organized and efficient in recent years. The rescue operations are now being handled by the local volunteer rescue squad, which was not always the case. Up until two years ago, climbers in

conjunction with the owner of the local climbing shop did all the rescue work. However, the rescue squad now has trained technical climbers who organize and lead rescue attempts and use climbers who are willing to participate. The role of the Forest Service is to provide personnel for the non-technical part of the rescue and to provide climbing equipment for the rescue squad.

Management Concerns

Regulations have never been a part of the climate at either the dispersed camping area or Seneca Rocks. Traditionally, climbers have very few restrictions and no safety regulations while climbing. In regard to the camping area, the recreation regulations for developed areas are also applicable here; however, because of the independent nature of the climber and the lack of regulations over long periods of time, climbers generally resent government interference.

While not directly related to management of climbing activities, law enforcement concerns also exist at Seneca Rocks. Campers at Roy Gap periodically are harrassed by some local residents. Camping equipment theft is regarded as a minor problem. In this regard, climbers would generally favor management control to stem harrassment and theft.

Commercial Use Concerns

Commercial use of Seneca Rocks involves businesses and individuals offering their services for a fee to teach climbing techniques. The most prominent commercial use is by the local climbing shop; however, other commercial use does exist, but mostly on an intermittent, minor

basis. None of the businesses or individuals are under outfitter-guide permits. Commercial use represents - and will represent in the short-term future - a negligible impact upon the social and physical environment.

Liability Concerns

Despite the number of accidents and fatalities at Seneca Rocks, climbers have never brought suit against the Forest Service. However, from an agency viewpoint, potential suits must be kept in mind while making management decisions in high-risk areas. As an example, in 1984, the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources decided to ban all climbing at Coopers Rock State Forest because of the increase in serious accidents and the likelihood of the agency being sued. (See Appendix D). Several other agencies and organizations are taking similar action (McEwen 1983).

Since climbing at Seneca Rocks is not restricted and the threat of a suit is ever present, in 1974, a sign warning climbers of hazardous conditions ahead was placed at a strategic location. The sign reads as follows:

SENECA ROCKS

YOU ARE ENTERING A NATURAL AREA WITH HAZARDS ASSOCIATED
WITH ROCKS AND HIGH PLACES. IN USING THIS AREA, YOU
SHOULD BE PROPERLY TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND PHYSICALLY
FIT. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY AND THE
PROTECTION OF OTHERS. PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE AREA.
IT IS NOT INDESTRUCTIBLE.

The wording on this sign was reviewed by the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for its legal interpretation and OGC perceived that in a court of law it would be adequate.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

The thrust of this chapter is to review the results of the questionnaire and to analyze the viewpoints of climbers and managers, plus, to summarize the key concerns. In order to meet the objectives as established in Chapter I, the climbers and managers were asked a series of questions to identify major concerns. The questions, results and analyses are as follows:

Perception of Concerns by Climbers and Managers

Social

Question: IS THERE CONFLICT BETWEEN ROCK CLIMBERS? This question was to establish if use levels were too high, which could cause friction among climbers.

Users' Results - Seventy-five percent concluded that no problem (1)* existed, and twenty percent perceived it only as a slight problem (2) as shown in Figure 1.

*Verbal Description of the Degree of Problem

- 1 - No Problem
- 2 - Slight Problem
- 3 - Moderate Problem
- 4 - Major Problem
- 5 - Serious Problem

Users' Perceptions of Conflict Among Rock Climbers

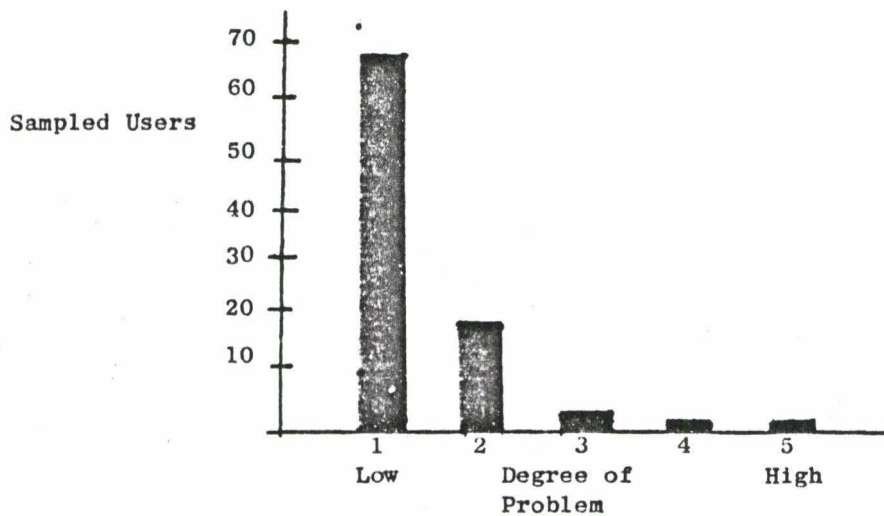


Figure 1

Managers' Results: Managers perceived only minor problems, with one concluding it was a moderate problem (3), with the other three seeing it as either no problem (1), or a slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 2.

Managers' Perceptions of Conflicts Among Rock Climbers

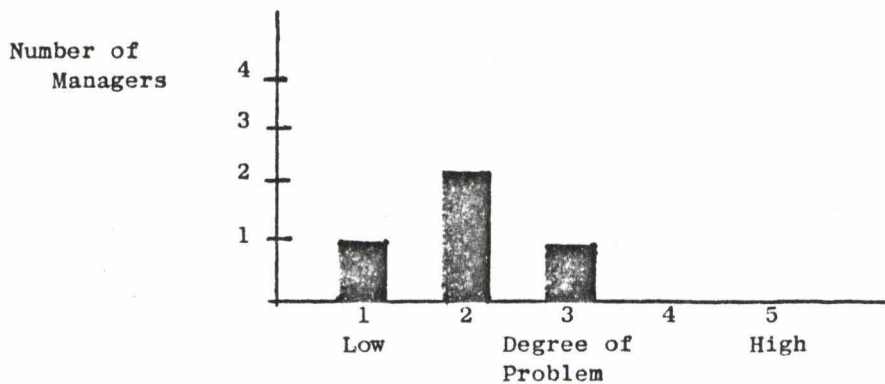


Figure 2

Analysis: The manager and the user perceptions correlate well with both parties viewing it as either a slight or no problem. Since some degree of crowding does exist, the experienced climber apparently is able to find relatively unoccupied routes which meet his satisfaction levels. Novice climbers or unskilled climbers using the easier and more popular routes must wait at certain times, but are apparently not bothered by this aspect. Both the novice and experienced climbers' expectations of user satisfaction are being met.

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Question: IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN ROCK CLIMBERS AND THE GENERAL HIKER: With the hiker using the same trail system to obtain access to the rocks and the associated problems with the climber on top of the rocks, how much conflict exists between these two different user groups?

Users' Results - Sixty percent of the sampled users did not detect a problem (1) and twenty-four percent perceived only a slight problem (2). Twelve percent were concerned enough to mention it as a moderate problem (3), as shown in Figure 3.

Users' Perceptions of Conflict Between Rock Climbers and the General Hiker

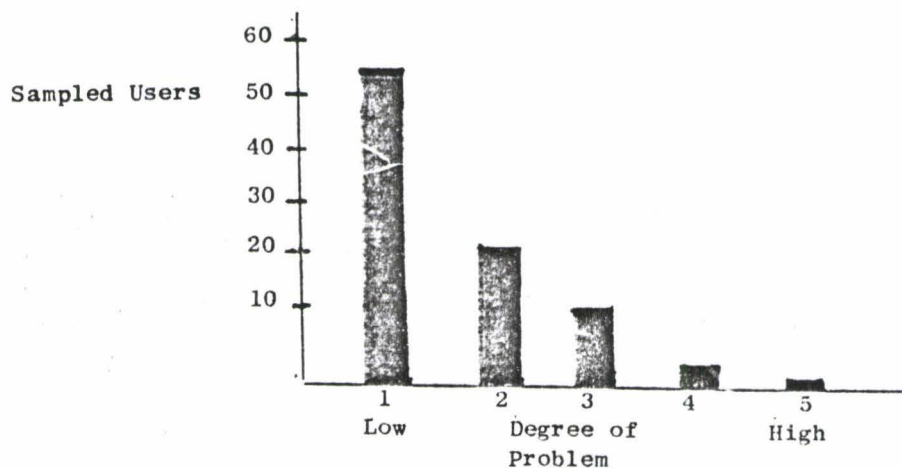


Figure 3

Managers' Results: Three of the managers agreed that this was only a slight problem (2) with one manager indicating that it was a moderate problem (3), as shown in Figure 4.

Managers' Perception of Conflict Between Rock Climber and the General Hiker

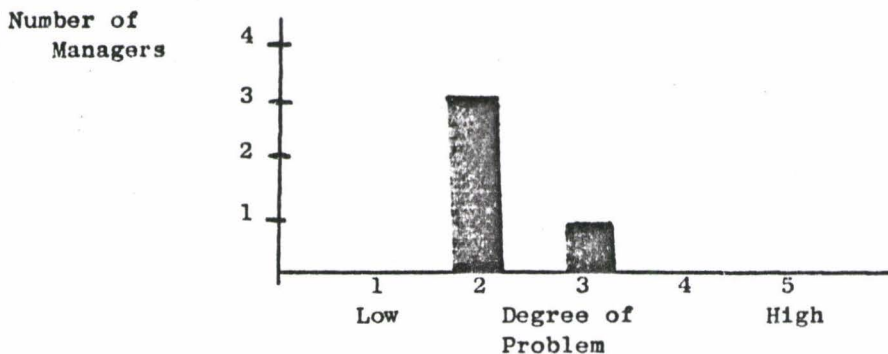


Figure 4

Analysis: Both the managers and the users' conclusions were very similar, with each group perceiving either no problem or a slight problem. However, even though only a slight problem now exists, these two groups need to be separated because of the safety problems associated with the hiker gaining access to the summit. Rocks can be purposefully or accidentally dislodged by a hiker causing a dangerous situation for a climber. Both groups should have access to the top but at separate points to avoid both safety and conflict problems, now and in the future.

Question: IS ROCK CLIMBING USE ON WEEKENDS A PROBLEM? The thrust of this question is to ascertain if use levels are too high, which affects user satisfaction in a negative way.

Users' Results: The results of this question indicate a variation of opinion on this subject. Forty-four percent do not think it is a problem (1) and twenty-four percent see it as a slight problem (2), whereas, twenty percent considered it as a moderate problem (3); also, twelve percent concluded it was a major problem (4), as shown in Figure 5.

Users' Perceptions About Rock Climbing Use on Weekends

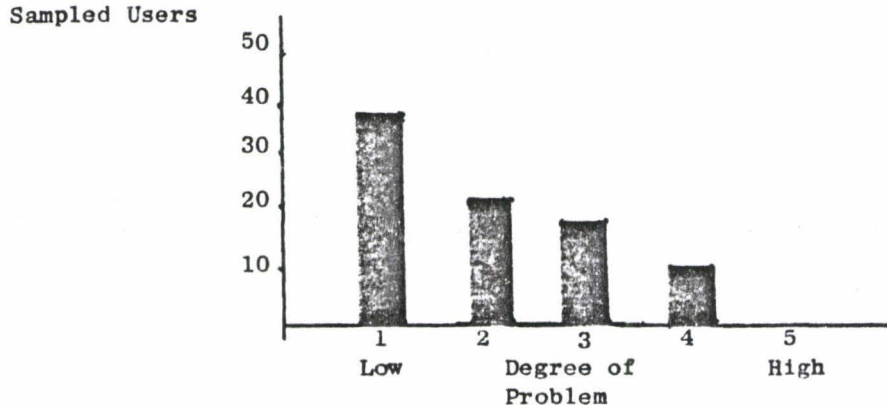


Figure 5

Managers' Results: Seventy-five percent of the managers consider it as a moderate problem (3), while twenty-five percent consider it as a major problem (4), as shown in Figure 6.

Managers' Perceptions About Rock Climbing Use on Weekends

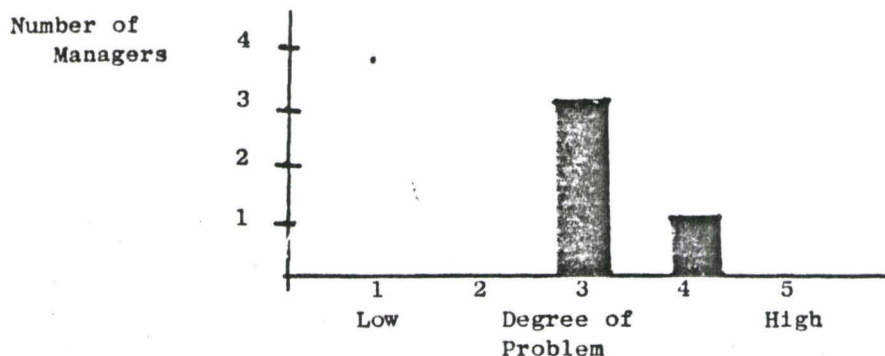


Figure 6

Analysis: In reviewing the results of this question, apparently some crowding does take place which limits the degree of satisfaction for at least one-third of the sampled users. This correlates with the managers' point of view which indicated a concern about use levels on a weekend. This is an issue of moderate concern.

Question: IS THERE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CLIMBER AND YOUTH GROUPS USING THE ROCKS?

Users' Results: Forty-nine percent of the users concluded that it was not a problem (1), with twenty-one percent perceiving it only as a slight problem. Sixteen percent thought it was a moderate problem, but nine percent saw it as a major problem, as shown in Figure 7.

Users' Perceptions Concerning Youth Groups

Sampled Users

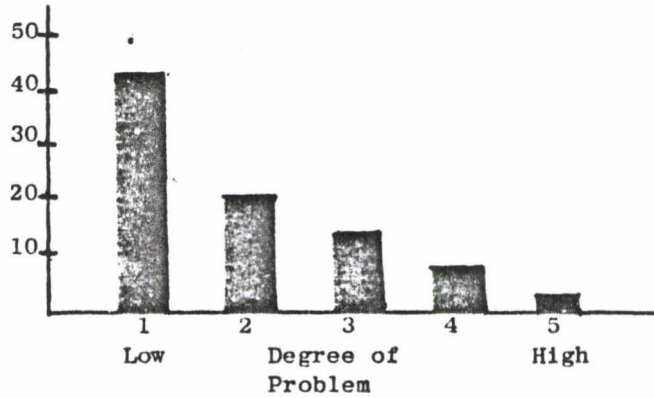


Figure 7

Managers' Results: Seventy-five percent of the managers believed it was a moderate problem (3) with twenty-five percent perceiving it only as a major problem (4), as shown in Figure 8.

Managers' Perception Concerning Youth Groups

Number of
Managers

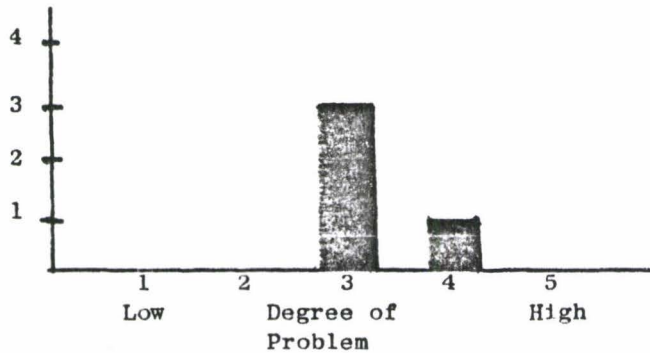


Figure 8

Analysis: Approximately seventy percent of the users perceived either a slight or no problem with youth groups. Whereas, three managers concluded that it was at least a moderate problem, with one manager considering it as a major problem. In all probability, with the number of climbing routes and the small number of youth groups using these routes at one time, the overall conflicts are moderate. However, certain of the easier climbing routes are used extensively by these groups (Blum 1984) and did generate conflict as shown in Figure 7, with approximately one-third of the users concluding there was a problem. The easier, more accessible climbing routes, rather than more difficult routes, generate the conflict when it occurs.

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Environment

Question: HAS THERE BEEN ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE TO THE ROCKS? With increased use, plus high use on the popular routes, is physical damage actually occurring in significant amounts to Seneca Rocks?

Users' Results: User opinion was fairly evenly distributed concerning the significance of the problem. Thirteen percent thought that it was not a problem (1) and thirty percent saw it only as a slight problem (2). However, twenty-four percent, twenty-three percent and ten percent perceived it as moderate (3), major (4), or serious problem (5), as shown in Figure 9.

Users' Perceptions of Environmental Damage to the Rocks

Sampled Users

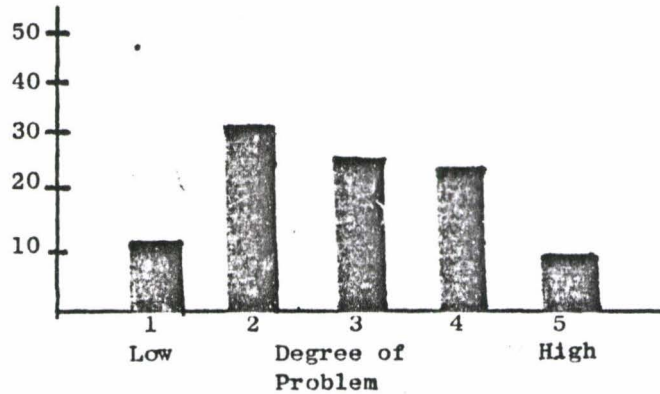


Figure 9

Managers' Results: Managers did not perceive environmental damage to the rocks as a problem. They were evenly divided between either no problem (1) or slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 10.

Managers' Perceptions of Environmental Damage to the Rocks

Number of
Managers

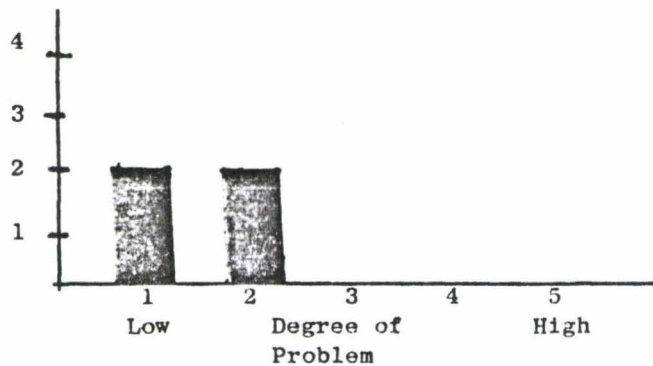


Figure 10

Analysis: Results indicate that users perceive a problem in the moderate to major range, whereas, managers do not see a problem. This could be a case of subjective judgement by the user on what actually constitutes environmental damage. However, the problem as noted by the climbers, perhaps, pertains to the trails leading to the climbing routes and the camping area where known physical damage is occurring, rather than to Seneca Rocks. With the use of modern climbing gear and techniques, the art of rock climbing is environmentally sound.

- - - - -

Question: IS LITTER IN AND AROUND SENECA ROCKS A PROBLEM?

Users' Results: Most users thought this was not a problem with sixteen percent and forty-one percent considering it as no problem (1) or slight problem (2). However, twenty-five percent of the users concluded that it was a moderate problem (3), and thirteen percent viewed it as a major problem (4); another five percent saw it as a serious problem (5), as shown in Figure 11.

User Perceptions on Litter as a Problem in and Around Seneca Rocks

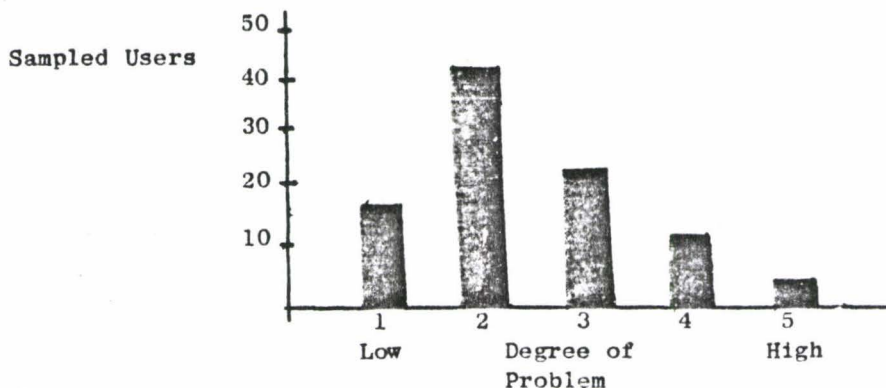


Figure 11

Managers' Results: Three out of four managers concluded it was a slight problem (2), with one manager viewing it as a moderate problem (3), as shown in Figure 12.

Managers' Perceptions on Litter as a Problem in and Around Seneca Rocks

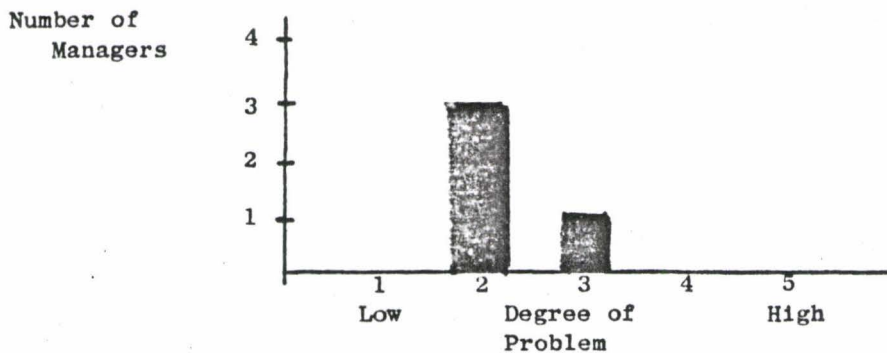


Figure 12

Analysis: In general, both the managers and the users consider this as a minor problem. For the most part, the climbers do and are willing to clean up after themselves and keep the area generally litter-free.

Question: IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH CAMPING AND SANITATION FACILITIES AT SENECA ROCKS?

User Results: Opinion is somewhat evenly distributed concerning this question, which is as follows: fifteen percent, no problem (1), twenty-three percent, a slight problem (2), seventeen percent, a moderate problem (3), twenty-eight percent, a major problem (4), and seventeen percent, a serious problem (5), as shown in Figure 13.

Users' Perceptions of the Camping and Sanitation Facilities at Seneca Rocks

Sampled Users

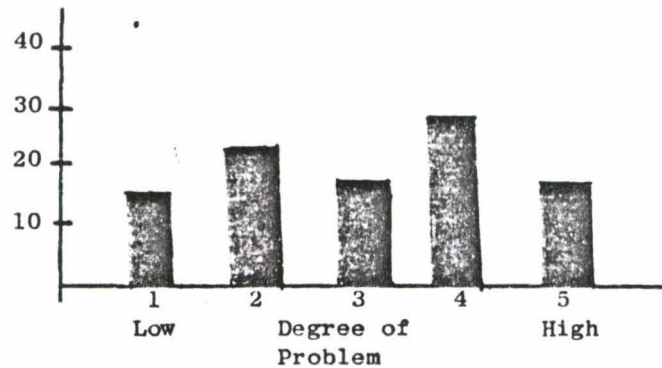


Figure 13

Managers' Results: Managers were unanimous in their opinion concerning this question with all four managers considering it a major problem (4), as shown in Figure 14.

Managers' Perceptions of the Camping and Sanitation Facilities at Seneca Rocks

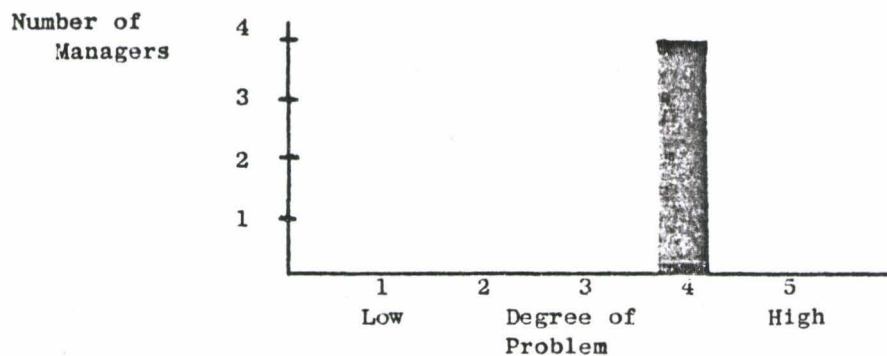


Figure 14

Analysis: Even though there is divergence of opinion between some users and managers, those users who are satisfied with existing conditions probably resent any intrusion by the Federal Government. As indicated by Forty-five percent of the users and all of the managers, this is a major problem which needs to be corrected.

Safety

Question: IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH UNSKILLED ROCK CLIMBERS USING SENECA ROCKS?

Users Results: Seventy percent of the sampled users believe that there is not a problem (1) or a slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 15.

Users' Perceptions of the Problem of Unskilled Climbers Using Seneca Rocks

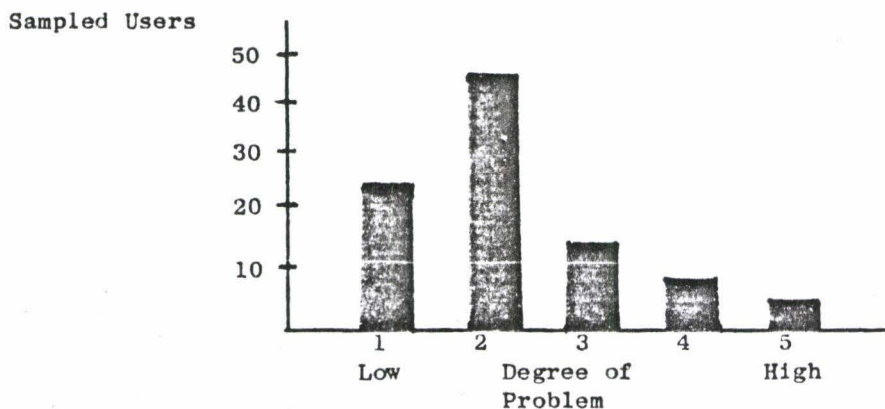


Figure 15

Managers' Results: Managers' opinions were mixed on this subject, with fifty percent of managers considering it a slight problem (2), while one manager thought it was a moderate problem (3), and one other manager viewing it as no problem (1), as shown in Figure 16.

Managers' Perceptions of the Problems of Unskilled Climbers Using Seneca Rocks

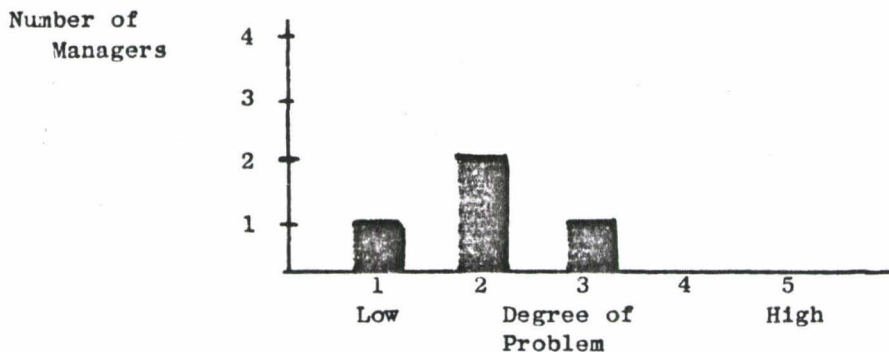


Figure 16

Analysis: The majority of managers and the users consider this to be a minor problem with a few users considering it as a major problem. Today's climber is more skilled and knowledgeable than his counterpart of a few years ago. The techniques have improved and the dissemination of technical information is now greater. Therefore, this is considered as a minor concern.

Question: ARE CLIMBERS USING THE PROPER EQUIPMENT?

Users' Results: The users were in common agreement that this was not a problem with ninety percent perceiving it as either no problem (1) or slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 17.

Users' Perceptions of Climbers not Using the Proper Equipment

Sampled Users

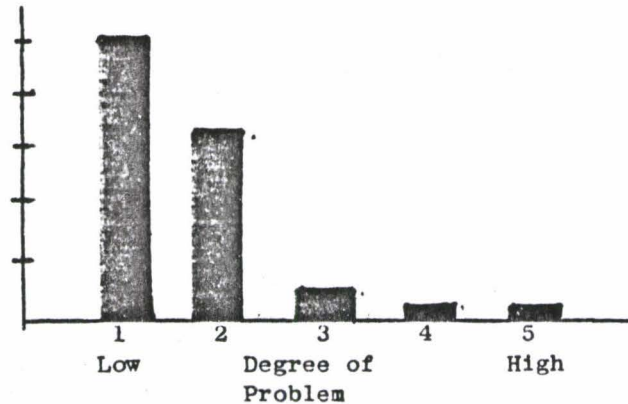


Figure 17

Managers' Results: Seventy-five percent of the managers believed it to be only a slight problem (2) and twenty-five percent saw it as no problem (1), as shown in Figure 18.

Managers' Perceptions of Climbers Not Using the Proper Equipment

Number of
Managers

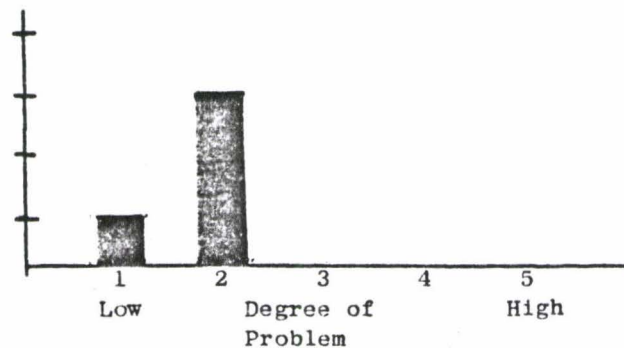


Figure 18

Analysis: Managers and users agree that this is not a problem. Climbing equipment that is well designed and safe is readily available to most climbers. The only problem noted by the managers is the non-use of helmets by the majority of climbers.

- - - - -

Question: ARE THE CLIMBERS USING THE STANDARD SAFETY TECHNIQUES?

Users' Results: Again, The users did not see this as a concern with seventy-six percent concluding that it was either no problem (1) or slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 19.

Users' Perceptions of Use of Standard Safety Techniques

Sampled Users

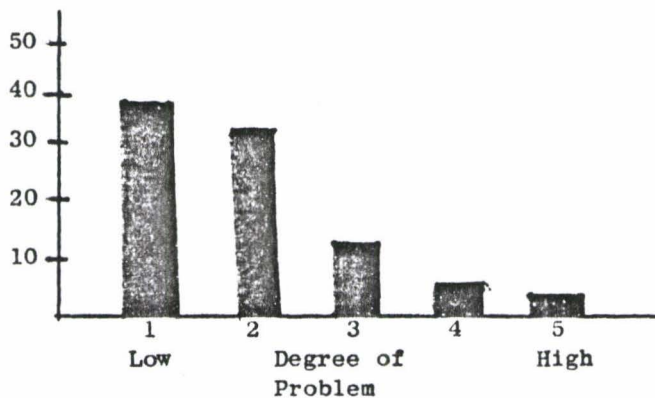


Figure 19

Managers' Results: Managers' viewpoints were divided evenly, with one-half of the managers considering it a moderate problem (3) and the other one-half seeing it as only a slight problem (2), as shown in Figure 20.

Managers' Perceptions of Use of Standard Safety Techniques

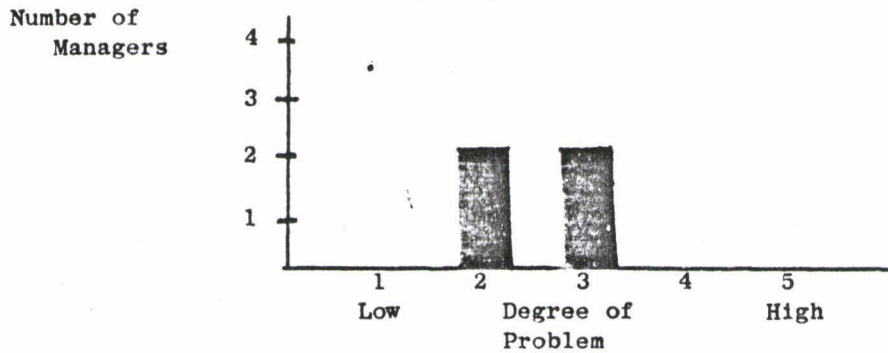


Figure 20

Analysis: Considering both the managers and climbers' viewpoints, the high use and the additional number of novices with the low fatality rate, the conclusion is that this is a minor problem.

- - - - -

Question: ARE THE PRESENT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS A PROBLEM?

Users' Results: Seventy percent of the users considered this as either no problem (1) or a slight problem (2), although eighteen percent saw this as a major problem (4), as shown in Figure 21.

Users' Perceptions of the Present Search and Rescue Operations

Sampled Users

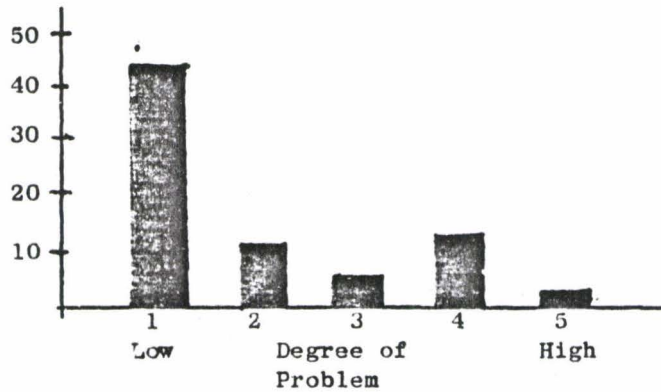


Figure 21

Managers' Results: All of the managers agreed that this is a moderate problem (3), as shown in Figure 22.

Managers' Perceptions of the Present Search and Rescue Operations

Number of
Managers

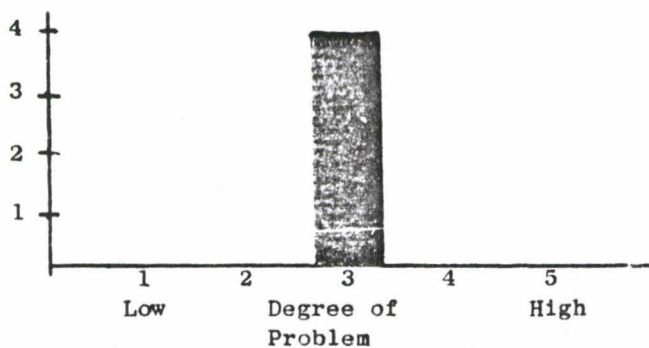


Figure 22

Analysis: Managers and users differ on this question; the reason for this difference is the lack of involvement by many users in a rescue operation. Therefore, some users saw it as no problem, whereas, the managers have been involved and understand that the system is adequate, but there is a higher standard of operations that needs to be met. Undoubtedly, as the rescue squad continues to do more rescue work, they will become more skilled in the techniques of removing an injured climber from the rocks

- - - - -

Management

Question: ARE THE PRESENT RULES AND REGULATIONS IN AND AROUND SENECA ROCKS A PROBLEM: Even though the present rules and regulations are minimal, this question attempted to ascertain how the user reacts.

Users' Results: Over eighty percent of the users did not see a problem with the present regulation structure. However, ten percent of the users saw major (4) or serious problems (5) with search and rescue operations, as shown in Figure 23.

Users' Perceptions of Present Rules and Regulations in and Around Seneca Rocks

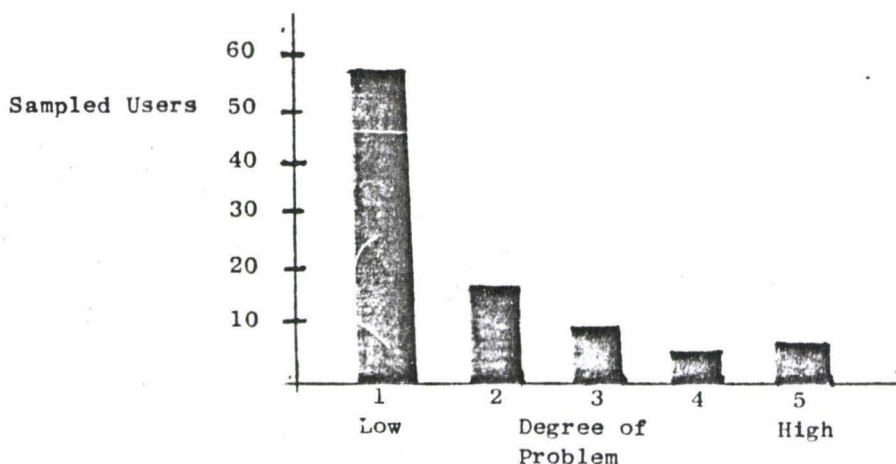


Figure 23

Managers' Perceptions of Present Rules and Regulations in and Around Seneca Rocks

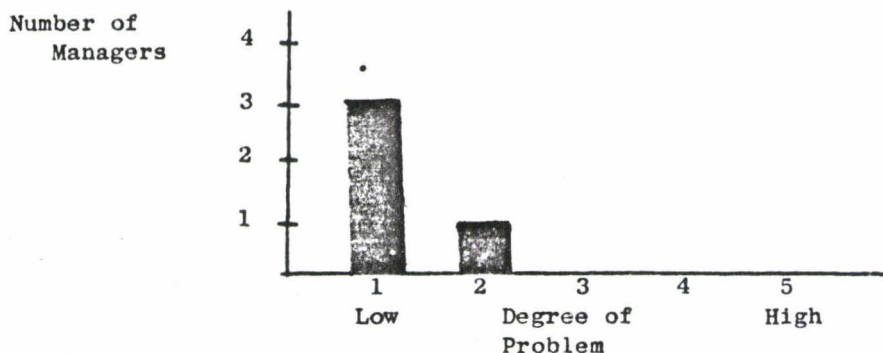


Figure 24

Analysis: Because of the minimal number of rules and regulations, both the managers and users did not see a problem. However, if additional regulations are added, it is believed users will be opposed in the short term.

- - - - -

Commercial Use Problems

Question: IS COMMERCIAL ROCK CLIMBING USE A PROBLEM?

Users' Results: Seventy-six percent of the users concluded that commercial use was either a slight problem (2) or no problem (1). However, eleven percent saw it as a major (4) or serious (5) problem, as shown in Figure 25.

Users' Perceptions of Commercial Rock Climbing Use

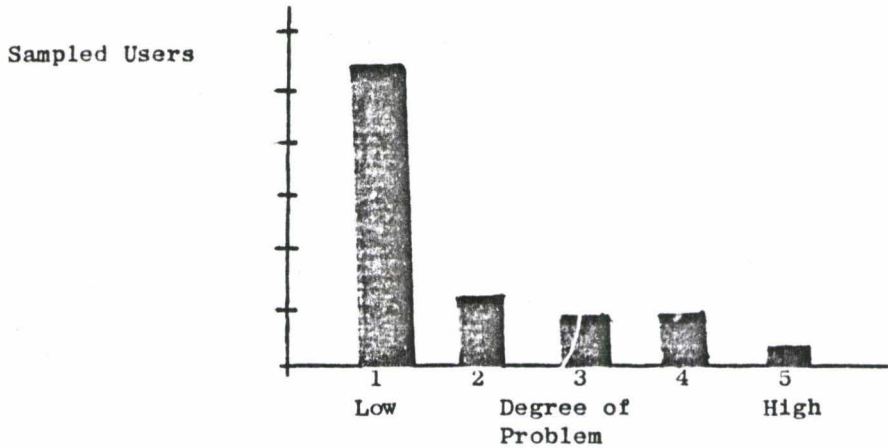


Figure 25

Managers' Results: One-half of the managers considered it as a slight problem (2), while the other half considered it as no problem (1), as shown in Figure 26.

Managers' Perceptions of Commercial Rock Climbing Use

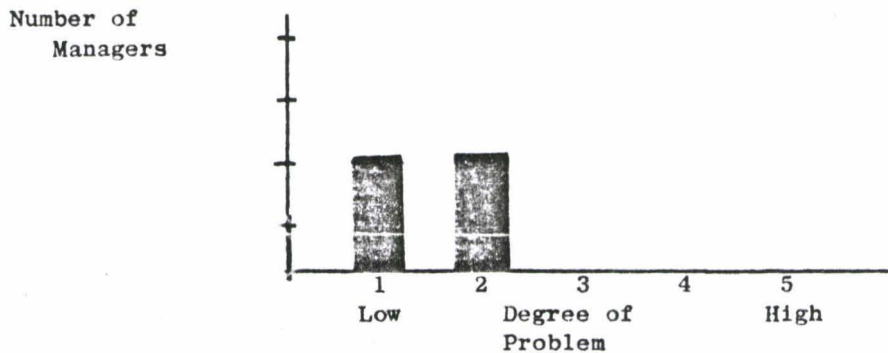


Figure 26

Analysis: Both managers and users concur that commercial use at the present levels is not a problem.

Comments by Area Managers

In order to gain a better understanding of the management problems associated with rock climbing, another questionnaire was sent to nine area managers who have situations similar to those at Seneca Rocks. (See Appendix C for the areas and the questionnaire). The intent of the questionnaire was to understand what management controls, if any, were being implemented and used by other managers. The respondents provided a wide variety of answers due to their diverse geographical and ownership patterns that included private, state and federal governments. (See Appendix F).

The following are the questions with a synopsis of results from each land manager. An analysis was not made on the results due to the variety of unknown conditions and policies existing on each area.

Social Concerns

Question: DO YOU PLACE ANY LIMITATIONS ON THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ROCK CLIMB?

Results: None of the respondents placed any limitation on the number of climbers. Two managers believed that this is a self-regulating process in which climbers will move to other less occupied routes.

Question: IF THERE ARE CONFLICTS BETWEEN ROCK CLIMBERS, HOW DO YOU HANDLE?

Results: All of the managers believed conflicts were either minimal or non-existent. If a problem did arise, it was generally handled by a law enforcement procedure, rather than area regulations or policy.

Safety Concerns

Question: DO YOU CHECK FOR CLIMBING SKILLS OR PROPER EQUIPMENT?

Results: Climbing skills or equipment are not checked except by one respondent. Rockwood Reservation requires that one member of each group be certified for both equipment and skills. Most managers regarded this as the responsibility of the climber and not management.

Question: HOW DO YOU HANDLE YOUR SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS?

Results: The Park Service handles their search and rescue by using their own trained staff in conjunction with the climbers. Franconia Notch uses their State Fish and Game personnel and obtains additional help from local climbers. All other respondents use area rescue squads for their work, but use local climbers as needed. Different organizations have different methods for accomplishing their rescue work, but most use rescue squads with help from local climbers.

Management Concerns

Question: DO YOU REQUIRE PRIOR REGISTRATION OR A PERMIT SYSTEM?

Results: Yosemite, Franconia Notch and Mississippi Palasaides do not require registration or a permit, but both Yosemite and Franconia Notch have a volunteer registration system. Rockwood Reservation and Monhonk Preserve have implemented a system in which climbers must have a permit prior to climbing. Devil's Tower requires all climbers to register.

Question: WHAT METHODS DO YOU USE TO INFORM THE CLIMBER OF RULES, REGULATIONS OR GENERAL INFORMATION?

Results: No one method was prevalent; area managers used mainly bulletin boards and verbal information when permits are issued or when registration was required. Other means of dissemination were newspapers, letters, annual meetings, educational programs and signs.

Commercial Use Concerns

Question: HOW DO YOU HANDLE ANY COMMERCIAL ROCK CLIMBING USE?

Result: Franconia Notch and Rockwood Reservation do not have any commercial use. Mississippi Palasaides, Devil's Tower and Monhonk Preserve do not allow any commercial use. Yosemite does have commercial use, but it is

handled by concessionaires. Any other commercial use in Yosemite needs to obtain approval from the concessionaire.

Liability Concerns

Question: HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF OR YOUR ORGANIZATION FROM LIABILITY?

Result: Yosemite, Franconia Notch, Devil's Tower and Monhonk Preserve made no special provisions for protecting themselves against liability claims. Yosemite had this to say, "We have no active program to protect ourselves from liability. Yosemite has a long tradition of allowing unrestricted rock climbing and is considered one of the world's foremost rock climbing areas. We maintain an appropriate search and rescue capability and carefully document our rescue responses."

Mississippi Palasaides carries liability insurance, but they do not make any special provisions for protecting themselves against liability claims; whereas, Rockwood Reservation does require all climbers to sign a release form absolving the Department of Conservation of any damages or claims.

Summary of Findings

As a consequence of the survey conducted among Seneca Rocks users, plus the opinion voiced by managers and managers of similar areas, the following findings were reached:

Social Concerns

- . Use levels are within a satisfactory range, although some crowding does occur on weekends, but not enough to generate user conflict or to detract from the experience.
- . The hiker and the climber need to be separated, especially at the summit where rocks or other objects can cause serious injuries to the climber.
- . Youth groups and novice climbers have generated a moderate amount of conflict on the easier, more accessible climbing routes.

Environmental Concerns

- . Environmental damage is not occurring to Seneca Rocks, but to the associated trail system used by both the climbers and hikers.
- . Camping and sanitation facilities for the climber are inadequate, but littering is considered only a minor problem.

Safety Concerns

- . Climbing skill levels are generally high with the climber using safe equipment and techniques, except for widespread non-use of the helmet.
- . Search and rescue operations are adequate, but there is need for better organization and technique.

Management Concerns

- . Management does not have a definitive method for dissemination of information to the climber.

Commercial Use

- . Because of the limited amount of commercial use now occurring, it has not generated a problem with either the climbers or with management.

Liability

- . Because of the known inherent risk in rock climbing and the warning sign at the trail entrance, the government is reasonably protected from any liability claims.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1969, the Federal Government purchased a tract of land that included Seneca Rocks which is noted for its scenic attraction and also for its popularity with rock climbers. This quartzite rock formation has the reputation of being the best climb in the East with over 173 major routes varying in skill levels from easiest to most difficult. Even prior to government ownership, Seneca Rocks was used by climbers on an unrestrictive basis, but as demand increased during the 1970's, so did the problems. Management of the area has virtually been the same except for a few minor management changes since government acquisition. Since a variety of problems exists, there was a need to address the current problems and concerns.

In order to do this, a study was developed to understand more fully the problems associated with the management of Seneca Rocks. To aid in this process, a questionnaire was developed in which climbers and both past and present administrators were asked for their input. A number of questions were asked pertaining to social, environmental, safety, management, and commercial use concerns. In addition, six managers of similar rock climbing areas responded and provided information on management controls for comparable problems. The purpose was to seek different management approaches in handling the same issues and problems.

Therefore, the focus of this study is to understand the concerns of both the climbers and managers, analyze these concerns and to provide management recommendations for the problems which were found.

The following are key findings with discussion, implications, management recommendations and cost of implementation.

. Use levels are within a satisfactory range

The study indicates minimal conflict between climbers and other user groups. Prior to this study, user satisfaction was an unknown element with very little useable information to make sound management decisions. Therefore, based on this study, the following two recommendations are made in conjunction with the objectives as stated in Chapter I, which is to provide a satisfying recreational experience.

1. Management, at this time, should not place any limitations on the number of climbers or implement a permit or registration system.
2. Management should establish a carrying capacity on the basis of a more in-depth study.

. Cost of Implementation

In order to establish the carrying capacity of Seneca Rocks, an estimated cost is \$1,250 based upon 120 man-hours.

. The climber and the hiker need to be separated at the summit of Seneca Rocks

Managers, along with a few climbers, have recognized a hazardous safety situation when hikers have either purposefully or accidentally dislodged rocks into the climbing area. Even though this represents a safety problem, the hiker has a right to use the rocks for viewing just as the climber does for his sport. In essence, both uses are valid

as long as management can meet the objectives as stated in Chapter I, 1) to preserve and protect the resource, and 2) to protect the user. Therefore, it is imperative that management take the necessary steps to rectify this situation by doing the following:

1. Eliminate the old trail which is causing environmental and safety problems and build a new trail to standard.
2. The proposed trail should be built to the top of rocks, away from the general climbing area but still allow for scenic views.
3. Signs should be used to inform both the hiker and climber of the purposes and concepts of separation at the summit.

Cost of Implementation

In order to implement these three recommendations, the costs are as follows:

1. To eliminate the old trail will cost an estimated \$500 and require eighty man-hours.
2. To build a trail up the front side of the rocks and provide for safe viewing, the estimated cost for contracting is \$105,000, plus an additional \$5,000 for administration of contract.
3. To properly sign the area, the estimated cost is \$1,500 for both manpower and materials.

Youth groups cause conflict problems

The results of this study indicate an ever increasing problem of conflict between youth groups and other climbers although, presently, it is only a moderate problem. The number of these groups has gradually increased over the last five years and constitutes a potential

long-term problem unless management institutes some form of control. In most cases, the conflicts have been confined to less than a dozen easily accessible routes.

In addition, youth groups have a greater probability of accidents because of the type of person involved. Group members are usually from the city or suburban areas, with limited amount of outdoor experience and no prior climbing experience. This situation readily lends itself to a greater likelihood of an accident and liability suits.

In order to meet the objectives as stated in Chapter I, 1) to protect the user, 2) to provide and enhance a satisfying recreational experience, and 3) to protect the agency from liability, the following recommendations are made:

1. Require all youth groups to register prior to use.
2. Request that the groups stay on six pre-selected routes.
3. Restrict the party size to ten or less with at least one qualified guide.
4. Notify other climbers of pre-selected routes.

Cost of Implementation

The administration of these recommendations will be handled primarily by personnel at Seneca Rocks Visitor Center, and the total estimated cost for implementing all recommendations is \$500 and seventy-five man-hours.

. Camping and sanitation facilities are inadequate

Both the managers and the climbers identified this as a major problem because of the total lack of facilities. This area, known as Roy Gap, has been used for primitive camping before and after government acquisition, primarily by climbers, but also by other recreationists. The area has developed on its own and sites lack water or sanitation facilities. Because of the heavy use and congestion over a long period of time, environmental degradation has taken place at a rapid rate.

Since the present location is suitable for developing facilities and to meet the objectives, 1) to preserve and protect the resource, and 2) provide a satisfying recreational experience, the following recommendations are made:

1. Design and build a primitive twenty-unit, walk-in campground with toilet and water facilities.
2. Construct a new road and parking lots for the climbers and other recreationists.
3. Charge a minimum fee for administrative control.

. Cost of Implementation

The cost to design and build a primitive walk-in campground, including the road, is estimated \$85,000. In addition, administration cost will be \$4,000 per year.

• Lack of information to user

This study indicated, indirectly, the problems of communications with the user and specifically the climber. One of the major problems - and a limitation of this study - was the skepticism of the climber concerning the role of government in exercising management options at Seneca Rocks. One of the reasons was the lack of prior agency communications with the climbers and the ultimate fear of "messing up" their climbing experience. In general, the climbers oppose any additional rules or regulations.

In order to break these communication barriers, a system needs to be established to inform and convey the positive role of government in management and to meet the objective as stated in Chapter I, to adequately inform the user, the following recommendations are made:

1. Develop a brochure that will provide information and explain management decisions to both the hiker and climber which will cover such items as: 1) hazardous conditions, 2) search and rescue information, 3) safety considerations, including recommendations for wearing helmets, and 4) other recommendations of this study.
2. Provide a Bulletin Board at the main trail entrance for the user.
3. Have visitor center personnel contact climbers on an informal basis to provide information and to gain understanding of climbers' concerns and problems.

. Cost of Implementation

The estimated cost for each of three recommendations is as follows:

1. The cost to develop the brochure which includes the printing cost is an estimated \$700 and fifty man-hours.
2. The cost of bulletin board which includes the material and installation is \$200.
3. To contact the climbers on an informal basis will require an estimated seventy man-hours at cost of \$500.

. Commercial use levels are insignificant

In considering the input of both climbers and the managers, commercial use levels are insignificant and do not constitute either a short or long-term problem under existing conditions. However, to protect the climber and the agency from liability which are stated objectives in Chapter I and to abide by Forest Service Policy, the following recommendation is made:

1. Place all commercial use under outfitter-guide permits.

. Cost of Implementation

To place all commercial use under an outfitter-guide permit is estimated at forty man-hours at cost of \$400 per year including administration of permit.

. Issues not considered a problem

In the following cases, present conditions or management strategy was adequate:

- In general climbers were using proper techniques, safety skills and equipment.

- Environmental damage is probably not occurring to Seneca Rocks, but the questionnaire did show this as a problem area. Further investigation by management is needed to clarify the results of the questionnaire.
- Search and rescue operations are adequate.
- Any government organization can be liable, but with the present signing, type of search and rescue operation and the known high-risk element connected with the sport of rock climbing, no additional measures are needed to protect the government from liability suits.

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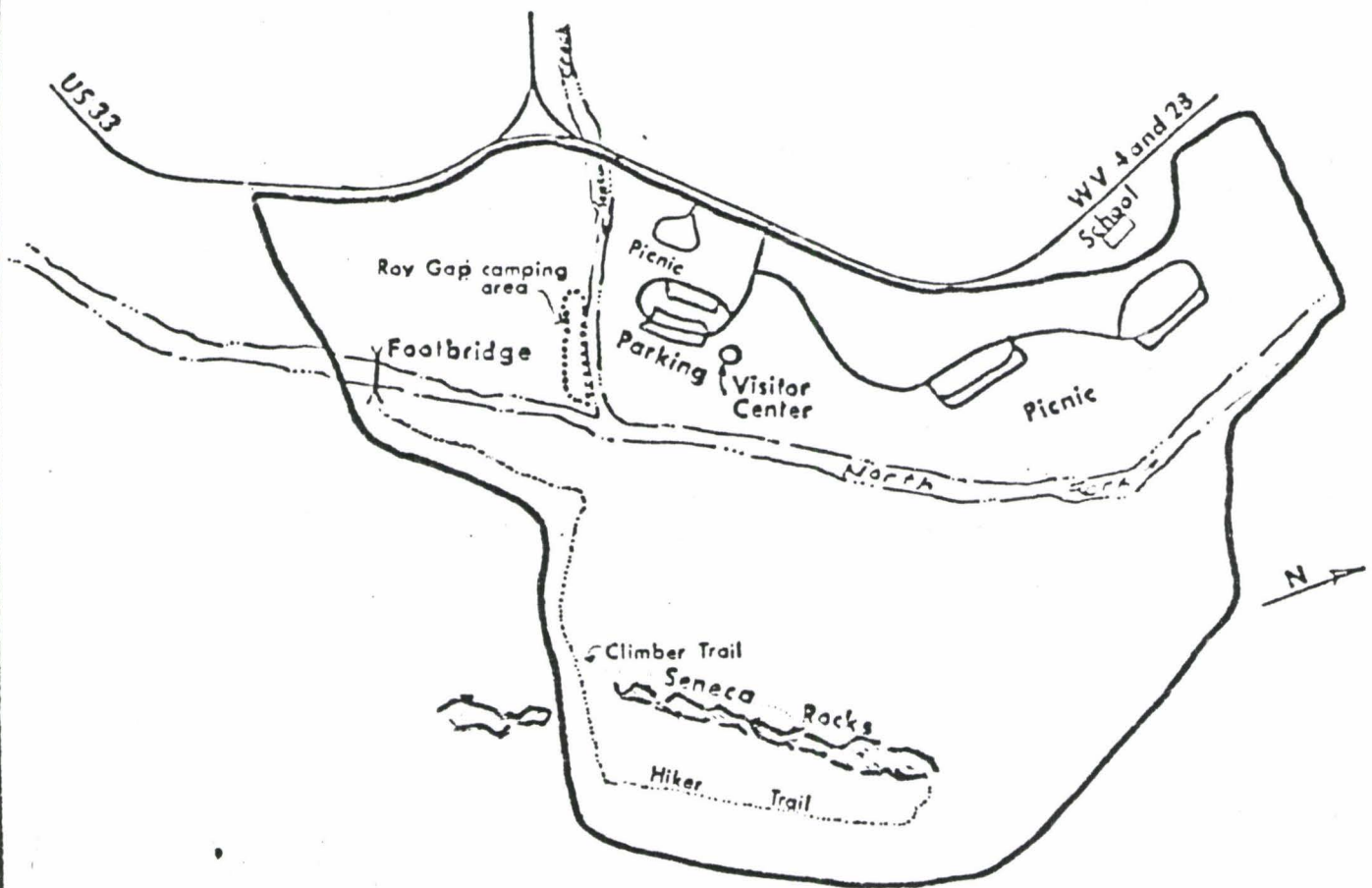
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APPENDIX A

MAP OF SENECA ROCKS

SENECA ROCKS



Recreation Area Boundary —————

Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$ in = 200'

APPENDIX B

CLIMBER AND MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE*

Please rate the following problem areas on a scale of one (1) to five (5).
1 = No problem to 5 = a serious problem. Please circle your response.

1. Unskilled rock climbers using the rocks
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
2. Climbers not using the proper climbing equipment
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
3. Climbers not using the standard safety techniques
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
4. Search and rescue operations
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
5. Environmental damage to Seneca Rocks
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
6. Litter in and around Seneca Rocks
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
7. Camping and sanitation facilities
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
8. Conflicts between rock climbers
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
9. Conflict between rock climbers and the general hiker
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
10. Rock climbing use on weekends
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
11. Youth groups using the rocks
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
12. Commercial rock climbing use
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
13. Rules and Regulations in and around Seneca Rocks
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
14. Other Comments

*To be used for course in recreation at Clemson University.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF AREA MANAGERS CONTACTED
AND QUESTIONNAIRE

COPIES OF ATTACHED LETTER/QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE FOLLOWING:

Rockwoods Reservation
Dept. Conservation
Route 1, Box 1599
Glencoe, Missouri 63038

Devils Lake State Park
Highway 12, South Rural Rt. 4
Box 36
Baraboo, WI 53913

Franconia Notch State Park
Franconia, NH 03580

Mississippi Palasaides State Park
4577 - Route 84N
Savanna, IL 61074

Giant City State Park
Route 1
Makanda, IL 62958

Devils Tower National Monument
Devils Tower, WY 82714

Yosemite National Park
P. O. Box 577
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

Grand Teton National Park
P.O. Drawer 170
Moose, WY 83012

Monhonk Preserve
Attn: Bradley Snyder, Director
Monhonk Lake
New Paltz, NY 12561

QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. Do you place any limitations on the number of people who rock climb?

2. Do you require prior registration or a permit system?

3. Do you check for climbing skills and proper equipment?

4. How do you handle your search and rescue operations?

5. How do you handle any commercial rockclimbing use?

6. If there are conflicts between rockclimbers, how do you handle?

7. How do you protect yourself or your organization from liability?

8. What methods do you use to inform the climber of rules, regulations or general information?

9. Any additional comments.

*To be used for course at Clemson University.

APPENDIX D

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON
ROCK CLIMBING AT COOPERS
ROCK STATE PARK

In Court Rockclimbing Fight Is Seen

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (UPI) — A conservation group says the state had better lift its ban on rock climbing and rappelling in Coopers Rock State Forest or be prepared to answer in court.

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy President Larry George last week gave the Department of Natural Resources 20 days to change its policy before it goes to Kanawha County Circuit Court for an injunction.

Donald Andrews, chief of the division of parks and recreation, said Monday a showdown in court would only cover money and would have the same end result.

The rock climbing ban was declared on April 24, 1984, after a number of people were injured in the park, located about 10 miles east of Morgantown.

George said the conservation group would seek an injunction under the state's Administrative Procedure Act. The conservancy contends the DNR violated the act's enforcement procedures by failing to issue a proposed rule with public notice, followed by a 30-day public comment period and approval by a legislative rulemaking review panel and the full Legislature.

"At a time when West Virginia's national tourism campaign features such outdoor sports as rock climbing, it is both ironic and confusing that DNR has chosen to unlawfully prohibit this very activity on state lands," George said in a prepared release.

"The conservancy recognizes the

legitimate concern of the DNR to reduce rock climbing accidents suffered by inexperienced climbers and believes that less extreme measures could accomplish this goal.

"The conservancy believes that a reasonable compromise is possible through use of a registration system to both satisfy the DNR's public safety concerns and permit continued rock climbing activities by experienced individuals."

Andrews said the DNR evaluated the situation "very thoroughly" and found that many people were suffering severe injuries rock climbing.

"We think we've acted in an intelligent and wise and responsible manner," Andrews said. "I think it would be unfortunate that the conservancy would take it to court. I think what we have done is proper and justifiable. If it goes to circuit court I think it would be decided in our favor."

Andrews said he consulted with legal counsel and was told it was not necessary to go through the procedure.

"It would be the same thing as saying you cannot swim in a swimming pool unless there is a life guard present, or that you cannot climb above Blackwater Falls," Andrews said. "People used to climb up the rocks at the falls and dive off. It was a very hazardous situation."

He also said earlier efforts to regulate the climbing put a "tremendous strain" on the park staff.

He said a few years back the department put up warning signs and had park personnel keep an eye on the climbers, telling them if they were doing something unsafe.

"It didn't work. It was just not workable," Andrews said. "The accidents just kept occurring and kept becoming more frequent."

He said the department then considered licensing or granting concessions to qualified mountain climbing associations that would be responsible, and liable, for training and supervising the climbers.

"But none of them wanted to do that," Andrews said.

The state carries insurance against accidents, but Andrews points out that "ultimately all the taxpayers are paying that bill."

"Somewhere along the line you have to consider the taxpayers," he said.

APPENDIX E

SELECTED UNEDITED COMMENTS
FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMENTS*

"I've been climbing over ten years, seven at Seneca Rocks. Climbers I've known and others in general are a very concerned and conscientious group in regards to environmental impact considerations. We would not jeopardize our access to any climbing area in any way. Efforts are made to maintain these areas such as organized trail repair, trash pickup, etc. I've noticed problems with lack of trash receptacles along campsite areas off Roy Gap Road. The indigenous population at times don't seem to respect or value their recreational areas much of the littering, vandalism of structures and plant life which they cause is usually directed toward the climbers rather than place blame for these and other problems. I'd like to see more enforcement of campsite rules and regulations for everyone's protection."

"I think Seneca Rocks is an excellent area, one that is respected by climbers and the general public, but I would rather climb on granite!"

"My only concern is with the failure of many climbers to wear helmets. This of course is a personal choice, but I only have one set of brains so I keep my helmet on."

"Camping on Roy Gap Road needs improvement."

*Drawn verbatim from climbers' questionnaire.

"No "improvements" in camping, sanitation, trails, etc., should be made.

These would increase use by those not seriously committed to safe, serious climbing. It would result in more use, more trash, more theft, more injuries and more environmental damage. In fact, maybe the bridge should be removed; 8 years ago with no bridge, only those with strong inclinations crossed the river. Keep non-climbers off the rocks. They get in the way, create noise which interferes with communication of climbing teams, and they get hurt."

"Seneca and the surrounding area is of National Park status. However because you are of course D.O.A. your funds may not be as large as N.P.S. The camp below Seneca at Roy Gap Road is very poor land management. My answer is this plan would likely cost around 5,000.00 I know thats a lot money, but you could charge for campsites and pay for it in less than one year! Land management is of the highest importance at Seneca due mainly to the fact it is the only multi-pitch area anywhere near so many population centers like Washington, Pittsburg, Harrisburg and Richmond. I know its easier said than done. However if we (climbers and D.O.A. staff) work together this type of plan could be put into action! Please let me know if I can be of any further help in any way."

"Excellent climbing area - Beginners are no problem. Most people seem to be fairly concern of litter & damage to area."

"Post signs to discourage people from washing in the streams. Don't make improvements in the trails as this will only encourage more people and hence more impact."

"Erosion along east face & west face trails is a problem. Trail improvements should be made and hikers/climbers should be more encouraged to stay on trails."

"Unfortunately, due to the high impact use of the area, rules & regulations are required for the future - campground control, campsite boundaries, cleaner & better sanitation facilities, etc."

"It seems that the times I have been there all has been well on the Rocks. w/the # of people using the Rocks I think better camping facilities would enhance the environment."

"Some groups tend to tie up a single route instead of spreading themselves out & giving others a chance. I've had to help some hikers down from the Rocks who climbed up with no equipment & very little climbing knowledge."

"Please protect this valuable resource before its too late!"

"I don't think anything should be changed at Seneca."

"The problems I have personally observed are (in order of importance)

(1) non-climbing, non-hiking locals harrassing climbers, breaking bottles, burning trees, having pickup truck duels and destroying the general environment; (2) hikers tossing rocks off the north peak to see how far down it is; (3) erosion of trail areas due to lack of proper trail maintenance."

"Other than sanitation facilities, the Seneca "situation" is good. Leave, as is!"

"When you consider the number of climbers using the camps along Roy Gap Rd and the south western approach to the Rocks I think climbers can take pride in their environmental ethics. I myself am not only a climber but also a hunter, fisherman, backpacker, and canoeist and I think that generally speaking, climbers as a group are more considerate of the environment than most other outdoorsmen. I've heard it rumored that there are plans to pave Roy Gap Rd and construct more symmetrical camp sites. I hope this is not true. There are two improvements, however, that should be made. More toilets and more trash barrels. These two improvements alone would do more to protect the environment at Seneca than anything else. I also feel that they should be kept where they are now and not placed on Roy Gap Rd."

"I have climbed for about 30 years, the last 15 incl. technical rock. I come to Seneca Rocks about 5 times a year and enjoy use of the rock, the scenery and the opportunity to meet with other climbers. If there were little use the latter opportunity would of course be minimal. Except for a warning to keep non-climbers from attempting scale potentially dangerous routes, advising climbers to observe common safety rules and a general rule against littering and destroying plants egc. I think regulations should be kept to a minimum. I also understand that large number of people trying to camp would have to be regulated differently than just a handful who would do no or little harm if they camped unregulated near the rocks (would also apply to cold weather seasons)."

"(Climbers) - people are going to camp along Roy Gap road irregardless of park regulations. Why not improve facilities? A shower would prevent bathing in the swimming hole. Some type of campsite improvement would help to minimize impact on Roy Gap Road area. Any type of commercial climbing (climbing classes) should have to pay for their use of the rocks. This money could be used to establish a rescue fund or improve camping conditions. Please limit these classes to weekdays as weekends are crowded enough. Climbing is a sport that necessitates freedom of choice. Any regulation would only make lawbreakers of otherwise innocent people."

"Better campgrounds and restroom facilities. Softer toilet paper in visitor center."

"Better garbage disposal needed - best left unregulated - shower facilities would be appreciated."

"Need campground & toilets & garbage cans, water,"

"As long as no big problems occur rules and regulations should be kept to a minimum. Some improvements should be made to the campground to prevent Environmental damage and promote better organization."

"Don't change a thing - it's great small is beautiful!"

"The Forest Service should improve the approach trails to the climb 5. There are in terrible need of repair and contribute to many "hiking" accidents. Rockfall is getting out of hand. I've only been going to Seneca since 1979 and it has doubled in severity since then. Too many inexperienced climbers sending it over w/o concern. Most inexperienced people are part of outing clubs, "looking for adventure". These inexperienced people just seem to be ignorant of how dangerous their carelessness is. Their "group leaders" need to be more assertive. Basically the Forest Service is doing a good job, please don't try Ohio's Dept. of Nat. Res. approach to people mgt; "if its questionable, its against the rules & regulations". Do something with what you learn by this survey!"

"While it would be nice to see developed campsites on Roy Gap Rd. I would not like the limited access that would be produced by such development. I have seen Roy Gap with (50+) people comfortably, I am a bit discouraged to see non-climbers using the area in large numbers everyone has rights to use the area but the climber - nonclimber conflict does exist."

"Too many inexperienced climbers and not enough supervision."

"Biggest problem is the lack of adequate camping facilities away from the invasion of night-roving cruisers who harass some campers. The rock climbing and hiking visitors generally get along well among themselves, each other, locals and the ecology of the area (except for camping impact)."

APPENDIX F

LIST OF OTHER AREAS INCLUDING
PERTINENT DATA

1. Rockwoods Reservation - Missouri Department of Conservation
 - a. Number participating - 8,000 register.
 - b. Crowding problems - Yes, on some popular routes.
 - c. Conflicts - None.
 - d. Litter and site damage - Minor.
 - e. Fatalities - None recorded.
2. Monhok Preserve - Private Non-profit Organization, New York
 - a. Number participating - 10,300 day-use permits and 1,000 annual.
 - b. Crowding problems - No, over 250 different routes.
 - c. Conflicts - None.
 - d. Litter and site damage - None.
 - e. Fatalities - Five in the last five years.
3. Mississippi Palasaides - State Park, Illinois
 - a. Number participating - Not available.
 - b. Crowding problems - No.
 - c. Conflicts - None.
 - d. Litter and site damage - None.
 - e. Fatalities - Two in the last ten years.
4. Devil's Tower - National Monument, Wyoming
 - a. Number participating - 1,000 ascents per year.
 - b. Crowding problems - Yes, on easy routes on weekends.
 - c. Conflicts - None.
 - d. Litter and site damage - Moderate litter.
 - e. Fatalities - None recorded.

5. Yosemite - National Park, California

- a. Number participating - 30,000 visitor climbing-days per year.*
- b. Crowding problems,- Yes, on popular routes.
- c. Conflicts - Infrequent.
- d. Litter and site damage - Some litter.
- e. Fatalities - Six in the last three years.

*A visitor climbing-day is one visitor climbing for one day.

6. Franconia Notch - State Park, New Hampshire

- a. Number participating - 2,500 registered in 1981.
- b. Crowding problems - Yes, on easier routes.
- c. Conflicts - None.
- d. Litter and site damage - Minor.
- e. Fatalities - Five in the last thirteen years.